

Refocus, Retool, and Rebuild for 2021 in Three Unique Ways

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Based on the Discretionary Effort Engagement Leadership Model

Who knew 2020 would be a year of upheaval, turmoil, and disruption? When I made my goals for 2020 in December of 2019, I planned for a year of amazing achievements. I have achieved many things in 2020 – most of which were not on my 2019 goal list.

To this point, today I read this quote: “You can’t always get what you want, but you don’t have to accept defeat.”

That is my exact sentiment and I recommend it to you as you strive to refocus, rebuild, and retool your team for 2021.

The refocus and retool process begins with you, the leader, and the principles taught in the Discretionary Effort Engagement Leadership Model can assist you in the rebuilding needed for 2021.

Discretionary Effort is the difference in effort and added value employees can give you versus what they have to do to get a paycheck.

Here are 3 components of an invigorated 2021 Discretionary Effort Engagement Leadership Model initiative.



1. Refocus on Employee Well-being.

"We are embedding health and well-being at the heart of our business strategy because our people are our greatest asset, and we recognize that a healthy, happy and committed workforce is vital to our business success." ~ Alex Gourlay, MD, Boots UK

If nothing else came from the pandemic, it brought a heightened sense of examining employee well-being and transitioning to a human-led value company versus an operational-based system. In the Discretionary Effort Engagement Leadership Model, this is covered in Level One, Safety and Security.

Controlling processes for the highest output of goods and services in a certain amount of time is still important yet a human-led value culture changes the focus to people policies that allow organization objectives to be met by employees who give their personal best and voluntarily give discretionary effort.

The refocus on people policies includes concern for the well-being of each employee. Well-being is not just about health even though that is and will always be essential to a vibrant workforce. In 2021, the focus will include the well-being of finances, family, career, community, and social needs.

Employees who know you care about them as a human beings, not just as a cogs in the wheel, are more likely to balance the elements of well-being. Predictably they are less susceptible to stress and experience less fear in one or more of these areas. They will be higher performing individuals, giving you discretionary effort on a regular basis.

2. Retool for Diversity and Inclusion

"The thing that makes the world interesting is our differences, not our similarities." ~Tim Cook, CEO of Apple

For decades, diversity and inclusion meant a narrow focus on gender, race, and age. In 2020 the defining qualities of diversity expanded.

As you retool for diversity and inclusion in 2021, include diversity of personalities. Ensure you have all four major personality types on your team.

Dominant (D in the DISC model) individuals give the team vision and help the team make critical decisions.

Outgoing, extroverted individuals (I in the DISC model) think outside the box, spread optimism, and can add humor in tense situations.

Calm, steady individuals, (S in the DISC model) add stability, methodical thinking, and reliability to the team.

Dependable and careful individuals (C in the DISC model) add important analyses, a detailed-oriented mindset, and an eye on compliance issues.

Take time to listen intently to their natural diverse opinions and insights. Then work to include their diverse suggestions in the final product. This process will make the final product better.

Diversity and Inclusion are part of the Second Level of the Discretionary Effort Engagement Leadership Model, Social Acceptance.

3. Rebuild Alignment

"Building a visionary company requires one percent vision and 99 percent alignment." ~ Jim Collins and Jerry Porra

Since the disruption of work in late February and March when people headed for home to work, many were furloughed, and others were let go, it has been difficult for many managers to keep their team focused on company goals and objectives, let alone company values, vision, and mission.

In "How to Earn the Gift of Discretionary Effort," the Third Level of the Discretionary Effort Leadership Model is Rational Alignment, meaning that you have made your case for the future and your employees can rationally align and support that vision.

Mechanics keep the tires on your car aligned. Chiropractors keep your spine aligned. Managers must keep their team members aligned with short-term and long-term objectives. Align them not only objectives, but dust off the mission, vision, and values and connect them to the larger meaning of their work.

Rebuilding alignment includes:

- Setting forth a vibrant picture of 2021 success
- Communicating your vision of success to your team on a regular basis
- Outlining definite steps in the goals and objectives

- Making clear assignments to individuals
- Having predictable check points with “How can I help you?” conversations or asking, “What blocks do you have that I can remove?”
- Expressing gratitude
- Celebrating success

Study these three levels in “How to Earn the Gift of Discretionary Effort,” implement the principles, and your company will flourish in 2021.

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